

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 H-01 RSR-01 /057 W

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R 250053Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9720

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5712

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, JA, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PARK'S COMMENTS ON KIM TAE CHUNG CASE

1. I ACCOMPANIED CONGRESSMAN LESTER WOLFF FOR A CALL ON PRESIDENT PARK AUGUST 24. IN THE COURSE OF CONVERSATION, WOLFF NOTED THE GREAT ATTENTION BEING PAID TO THE KIM TAE CHUNG CASE IN THE U.S. AND JAPAN AND ASKED PRESIDENT PARK FOR HIS COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT. PARK SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE HIGHLY CRITICAL COMMENTS BEING MADE ABROAD ABOUT THIS MATTER. THE ROKG IMAGE WAS SUFFERING BADLY AS A RESULT. HE SAID HE WAS NOT HAPPY THAT KIM WAS ABDUCTED BECAUSE HE REALIZES THE DISADVANTAGES FOR HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. PARK SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO BE SPECIFIC IN HIS COMMENTS BECAUSE THE MATTER WAS UNDER INVESTIGATION AND HE WISHED TO SECURE ALL THE FACTS BEFORE MAKING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT. HE CONSIDERED THERE WERE THREE POSSIBILITIES: A) THE NORTH KOREANS OR THEIR AGENTS MAY HAVE DONE IT; B) SOME AGENCY OF THE ROKG COULD HAVE CARRIED IT OUT; AND C) KIM TAE-CHUNG HIMSELF COULD HAVE

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HAD THE IDEA IN ORDER TO DRAMATIZE HIS POSITION. AS OF

NOW ALL COMMENT ABROAD WAS ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT IT WAS AN AGENCY OF HIS GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS GUILTY. THE ONLY WAY TO ANSWER THIS WAS TO COMPLETE A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE APPRECIATED THE NEED FOR QUICK ACTION OTHERWISE THE DISADVANTAGES FOR HIS GOVERNMENT, WHICH ALREADY EXISTED, WOULD BE MULTIPLIED.

3. PARK SAID HE HAD RESTRICTED ACCESS KIM TAE CHUNG IN RECENT DAYS DESPITE REQUESTS OF JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARIANS, LOCAL AND FOREIGN PRESS AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS WHO WISHED TO SEE KIM TAE CHUNG. WHEN KIM HAD FIRST RETURNED TO KOREA THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOWED HIM FREE ACCESS AND AS A RESULT HE WAS CONSTANTLY IN TOUCH WITH VARIOUS POLITICAL AND NEWS FIGURES AND WAS NOT COOPERATING WITH THOSE WHO HAD BEEN CHARGED TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE. IN FACT EVEN NOW KIM WAS NOT COOPERATING FULLY WITH THE INVESTIGATION. SO FOR THE TIME BEING, IN AN EFFORT TO ACCELERATE THE INVESTIGATION, KIM WAS AT HOME, NOT UNDER ARREST BUT VISITORS WERE BEING KEPT AWAY. PARK REPEATED THAT THIS WAS FOR QUOTE THE TIME BEING ONLY UNQUOTE.

4. COMMENT: WOLFF HAD INDICATED TO ME THAT HE INTENDED TO RAISE THIS QUESTION WITH PARK AND I TOLD HIM TO FEEL FREE TO DO SO. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS WERE PREDICTABLE. HE TOOK GREAT PAINS TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF TO WOLFF WHICH IS CLEAR INDICATION HE REALIZES HOW BADLY THE CASE APPEARS TO THOSE ABROAD. NEVERTHELESS, HIS EXPLANATION LEFT A GREAT DEAL TO BE DESIRED. AS I EXPECTED, HE LIMITED HIS COMMENTS USING THE INVESTIGATION THAT IS UNDERWAY AS JUSTIFICATION. HE DID, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY IN THE FACT OF THE GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE REACTION WITH WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FACED. THIS IS A POINT I HAVE BEEN MAKING TO A NUMBER OF HIS CLOSE ADVISORS WHENEVER THEY RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE INVESTIGATION WITH ME. PARK GAVE NO HINT AS TO HOW HE WILL HAVE THAT INVESTIGATION TURN OUT BUT THEN I DID NOT EXPECT HIM TO HAVE YET DECIDED HOW TO SETTLE THE

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MATTER WITH LEAST FURTHER DAMAGE TO HIS POSITION.  
HABIB

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**To:** STATE  
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